

not use, the existing production methods of okara. On the contrary, okara used in the present invention as a raw material is prepared by a certain existing production method.

JP '458 further discloses, in the paragraph [0015], that "a shearing force with a rotary blade and another shearing force by grinding down by friction are used in combination." Accordingly, the reference method requires rotary shearing force as an essential component. If the method is performed without the rotary shearing force, the enzyme employed may leak, and generate disagreeable flavor.

The raw material used in the Example 1 described in the paragraph [0023] of JP '458 is "soybean from which the husk and hypocotyl have been removed." Since the husk of soybeans is hard and difficult to process, even the high pressure homogenizer disclosed in paragraph [0024] of the reference cannot provide fine particles of soybean husks with ease. Accordingly, soybeans from which the husks and hypocotyls have been removed are used in the Example of JP '458, indicating that the method of this reference avoids the use of the whole soybean as a starting material. This is supported by the suggestion that the method of JP '458 cannot use okara prepared by the existing production method, containing husks of soybeans, and therefore the technique of this reference cannot employ okara, prepared by the existing production method, containing husks of soybeans.

JP '038 discloses "removing husks and fibers of soybeans contained in okara as impurities (claim 1)." The technique of this reference removes the remaining portion, or peculiar smell, by a chemical treatment. In comparison, the technique of the present application removes smell by adding a certain volume of water and by boiling. However, okara basically consists of husks and fibers of soybeans, and accordingly, the method of JP'038 can provide only a very low yield, and there is no disclosure relating to fine particles of okara. In addition to this, the method of JP '038 can only produce coarse particles of treated okara with poor texture.

The method of the present invention relates to a technology in which okara prepared by the conventional production method (which is renounced by JP '038 and JP '458) is entirely processed without removing the husks and fibers of soybeans. The method of the invention can provide a paste containing fine particles with no flavor and no peculiar smell by repeatedly

adding a predetermined amount of water to okara and boiling it without grinding out by friction or dehydration after boiling. Accordingly, the present invention is quite different from those disclosed in JP '038 and JP '458.

The present invention has been completed by repeatedly producing prototypes in order to reuse okara which includes husks of soybeans and which has been treated as an industrial waste by-product generated during the production of tofu. In reality, 800,000 tons of okara are discarded in Japan per year.

The present invention can provide a simple operation for treating okara while suppressing costs for equipment and production cost, as well as a product that is quite different from those provided by JP '038 and JP '458. The okara provided by the present invention has one third of the calories of the conventional product and can serve as a food raw material consisting mainly of dietary fibers without sugars and fats. This okara can be effective for the prevention of colorectal cancer and obesity, for dieting, and as a countermeasure against metabolic syndrome, and the like, which may considerably contribute to society.

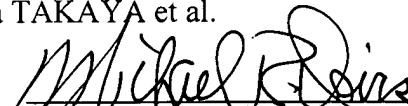
For these reasons, Applicants take the position that the presently claimed invention is clearly patentable over the applied references.

Therefore, in view of the foregoing remarks, it is submitted that the ground of rejection set forth by the Examiner has been overcome, and that the application is in condition for allowance. Such allowance is solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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